



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability
2010-2011**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Frederick Douglass Academy IV Secondary School

Middle-High School K393

**1010 Lafayette Ave
Brooklyn
NY 11221**

Principal: Elvin Crespo

Dates of review: April 12 - 13, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Doug Knecht

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Frederick Douglass Academy IV Secondary School is a middle-high school with 452 students from 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 83.6% Black, 14.6% Hispanic, 0.4% White, 1% American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 0.4% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 18.1% special education students. Boys account for 48.2% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51.8%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 87.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is Underdeveloped.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The new principal is developing a structure for ongoing dialogue with teachers that identifies best practices and pushes teachers toward their next steps so that all students receive stronger instruction.
 - A common language for instruction is emerging among staff, in part due to routine classroom observations and consistent feedback from school leaders. Opportunities for students to make real-world connections in their learning, and the expectation for increased rigor and writing are stressed across observation reports.
 - Teachers laud the professional learning options provided this year, commenting on the fact that a number of trainings support certain instructional skills. Differentiation and use of technology in classrooms have been targeted in professional development, and the school community expects to see impact on student success in coming months.
- All teachers participate in teams that meet regularly to discuss effective supports to improve student learning.
 - A culture of sharing promising teaching strategies has taken root in the school, as expressed by staff. A “Common Core Leadership” team and discipline-specific teacher department teams meet weekly to discuss and publicize successful efforts to engage and challenge students, some of which have been based in the examination of student data and work.
 - Some teachers and other key staff are provided with leadership opportunities as a result of the creation of the above-mentioned teacher-led teams. These teacher leaders articulate a sense of pride and excitement as they grapple with how to collaborate with, and drive, their peers to improve the learning experiences of students.
- The school’s open door policy communicates to families that their voices and opinions are valued as the school engages with parents to develop systems for supporting students’ academic growth.
 - There is hope in the school that, after three previous principals in the last two years, this new leader will bring back a culture of college readiness that was a founding principle of the school. Some initial changes in behavioral and academic expectations of students have been noticed and appreciated by students, teachers and principals.
 - The school community praises the principal for setting a tone of inclusiveness and transparency. Parent leaders hail the principal and teachers as responsive to issues and open to their involvement in key school decisions. The effect has been a renewed sense of possibility and shared efforts to solicit financial resources and develop structures to support higher levels of student achievement.

- School goals focus on improving classroom instruction in ways that support learning across the school.
 - Goals focus on honing skills teachers need to get students college-ready, including: (a) infuse writing across the curriculum; (b) engage teachers in collaborative inquiry process; (c) use data to differentiate instruction, especially for students with disabilities and English Language Learners; (d) develop curriculum aligned to the Common Core learning standards. These high leverage goals have prompted discussions among staff that are forging a common instructional language and building capacity to support a range of student needs.
 - When speaking with staff and parents, there is a culture of shared responsibility for executing school-level goals in order to improve instruction and support students. Action plans are emerging that detail who is responsible for what, and by when, so that everyone in the school community has clarity on how the school will accomplish these goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop curriculum that consistently provides every student with rigorous, thoughtful work, which leads to higher order thinking skills as well as engagement across the school.
 - Efforts to prioritize writing have been initiated and teachers are aware of this priority. In particular, the English department has a goal for all students to graduate able to construct a four-page essay with strong supporting details. At this juncture, though, students are not typically engaged in extensive writing or performing tasks that require deeper interpretation and analysis, which such an essay demands.
 - In general students demonstrate a willingness to respond to teachers' prompts and participate when called on. Yet, students say they do not feel that the level of challenge in assignments prepares them for college. Engagement across classes, therefore, is not yet defined by cognitive and skill development as much as by the completion of work.
- Implement teaching strategies that allow a diverse group of students to access curriculum that challenges them to articulate their thinking, support their arguments with evidence, and push them to their academic best.
 - Student work reveals inconsistent rigor for the range of student needs in the school, or even within homogenous classes. As noted, the principal and staff are beginning to examine what challenging, college-ready assignments and what differentiation look like, but the outcome to date has not had the desired impact on student work.
 - While one classroom visited had students of various ability levels responding to tasks tailored to their next learning steps, in every other classroom, students received undifferentiated work. Some students sat without engaging in the task because they had either completed a response already or did not understand how to respond.
- Support teachers in effectively using classroom and periodic assessment to adjust instruction to meet the needs of different groups of students.

- Since lessons are almost universally undifferentiated, there is little evidence that teacher collaboration, formative assessment creation, and access to other data sources have led to informed instructional decisions to support students in achieving their next learning steps.
- Other than references to intervention services (AIS) and programming students based on ability, periodic and classroom assessment data on student subgroups does not appear to be used effectively. Consequently, teachers are not meeting students where they are while still stretching them to fulfill their academic potential.
- Align technology and budgetary resources to develop or hire talented staff to program students equitably so that all scholars graduate ready to succeed in college.
 - Currently, because of the recent arrival of the principal, there is little alignment between budget and goals. For example, although there are important goals around instructional changes, there are no coaches or other pedagogical supports to ensure the success of this goal. Without clear alignment, the school cannot ensure that goals are met. (1.3a)
 - Teachers, students, and parents acknowledge that student schedules do not support universal student success. As a result, not all students have access to high expectations and a college-preparatory experience. (1.3b)
- Create structures, tools and benchmarks that allow the school to carefully track progress toward school-wide goals to ensure that the school is successful in reaching its targets.
 - With the numerous leadership changes in the last two years, annual planning processes are not well aligned. A long-term planning tool with goals, action steps and responsibilities is not yet available.
 - After an initial needs assessment and the establishment of goals for the school, the principal has received support from teachers and parents for his vision. However, that has yet to translate into a structure to track progress toward interim benchmarks and the ultimate goals.
- Capitalize on the new leadership, a cohort of engaged students, and a group of committed teachers to establish a school culture in which all students support each other and expect to graduate college-ready.
 - Despite some success on the part of the principal to reduce safety concerns, students still remark on the lack of respect that their peers have for each other and for teachers. There is a pervasive desire to have a school culture in which striving for excellence and caring for one another are common values.
 - While students and parents express gratitude for the commitment and love of teachers in the school, they express concern that the school has not yet invested in structures and routines that ensure that all students are successfully on a path toward post-secondary school success and none fall through the cracks.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name:	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score	X			
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?	X			
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?	X			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?	X			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?	X			
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?	X			
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?	X			
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?	X			
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?	X			

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.

<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?		X		
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?	X			
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?	X			
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?		X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?		X		
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?		X		
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?		X		
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?	X			

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?	X			
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?	X			
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?	X			
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?	X			

Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed